

VZCZCXRO8513

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DE RUCNDT #1170 3642232
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO IMMEDIATE 1334
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7968
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 001170

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2019

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: FM ALKALAJ SEEKS EARLY
U.S. CONSULTATION ON KEY SECURITY COUNCIL MATTERS

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj told Ambassador Rice on December 16 that early bilateral consultations on key Security Council matters would ensure that the Foreign Ministry has sufficient time to gain consensus among BiH's tri-presidency for Council action. Alkalaj thought the tri-presidency would be able to reach consensus on most issues, but that BiH would likely abstain on matters related to Kosovo or BiH. Ambassador Rice sought Alkalaj's support for Security Council action expected for early 2010 to increase pressure on Iran to comply with its international obligations. She encouraged Alkalaj to support keeping the discussion of the Goldstone report in the Human Rights Council in Geneva, rather than in the Security Council. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Bosnia and Herzegovina Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj, on a visit to New York to consult with P5 Permreps, told Ambassador Rice on December 16 that Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted to play a constructive role in the Security Council. Explaining the dynamics of the BiH tri-presidency, which under the Dayton constitution has responsibility for Foreign Policy, Alkalaj said early bilateral engagement on upcoming Council decisions would allow the Foreign Ministry to ensure consensus would be reached in the tri-presidency for BiH's actions in the Council. Alkalaj said he had constructed a simple chain of command in the Ministry for Security Council matters, with UN Permrep Barbalic reporting to the Director of International Organizations, who reports directly to Alkalaj. The Foreign Minister believed the streamlined hierarchy would allow him to stay up to date on important Council matters and to lay the groundwork for the tri-presidency to take timely decisions. In addition to the regular interactions between Ambassador Rice and Ambassador Barbalic in New York, Alkalaj said briefings from the U.S. Ambassador in Sarajevo on important issues could also help him to take decisions. He thought that the tri-presidency would be able to reach consensus on most issues, but that BiH would abstain on questions involving Kosovo or BiH itself.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Rice welcomed the prospect of working closely with BiH on the Security Council, and said Iran would be an issue that would require early Council action in 2010. The U.S. had a strong preference for a negotiated solution, she said, and would continue to urge Iran to pursue the engagement track in the context of the P5 1 dual track process. However, Rice said the U.S. and others had concluded that the pressure track needed to be amplified, since Iran had reneged on earlier commitments and was continuing to violate its international obligations. Rice emphasized that the goal of the pressure track would not be to punish Iran, but rather to clarify the choices available to it, and to encourage it to pursue an alternate course. Rice asked Alkalaj for Bosnia and Herzegovina's support to increase this pressure in the Security Council. She expected that informal consultations would begin early in the year, and that a vote on a resolution would take place in mid to

late February.

¶4. (C) Alkalaj sought Ambassador Rice's views on the appropriate venue to discuss the Goldstone report. Ambassador Rice said that the focus should be in the Human Rights Council (HRC), which commissioned the report, noting that both the U.S. and BiH participated in the HRC in Geneva.

Rice believed that the contentious debates about the Goldstone report in New York had been poisonous to the peace process. The General Assembly debate had become a "circus." It would also not be helpful for the Security Council to take up the report. The U.S., she said, had encouraged Israel to carry out its own credible investigation, and Israel was doing so.

RICE